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ABSTRACT

A literature review, intended to help in the development and assessment of effective manager training programs, explored development of conflict management research with respect to managers and their subordinates and examined individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors that affect the management of conflict. Although limited in scope, the dispositional approach formed the foundation of conflict research, leading to the later identification of individual characteristics that affect conflict and its management. Lamude and Scudder's (1992) study of personality characteristics of Type-A managers revealed a positive correlation between Type-A managers and aggressive and avoidance conflict management styles and a negative correlation between Type-A managers and accommodation, collaboration, and compromise strategies. Gender variables and moral orientation offered insight into processes of conflict management. Shockley-Zalabak (1981) found no gender differences among conflict style preferences. Korabik et al. (1993) found no gender differences in conflict management styles of experienced managers but significant gender differences among those without managerial experience. Gender demonstrated a significant role in differences between subordinates' behavior in conflict. Gender differences can be affected by experience and subordinate responses; moral orientation can be affected by context (e.g., work versus home). Factors associated with organizations showed significant differences in how conflict is managed. Organizational level (intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup) and decision-making processes, and a conglomeration of conflict variables contributed to the way conflict is experienced and managed in the workplace. Interpersonal and situational flexibility seems to be highly effective in managing conflict. (Contains 31 references.) (YLB)

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: CUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS FROM CONFLICT RESEARCH

A Doctoral Research Paper

Presented to

the Faculty of the Rosemead School of Psychology

Biola University

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August, 2001

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ABSTRACT

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: CUES AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR MANAGERS FROM CONFLICT RESEARCH

by

Joey A. Collins

The goal of this review is to explore various aspects of conflict management that can assist in the development and assessment of effective manager training programs. Since the 1960s, interest in the field of conflict research has remained high. Researchers have studied diverse factors that influence conflict and its management. Consequently, the focus of study has shifted from understanding conflict management through two-dimensional modes (Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970) to understanding it through a conglomeration of behavioral components (Munduate et al., 1999; Van de Vliert et al., 1995). Since both individual characteristics and organizational factors influence conflict management, interpersonal and situational flexibility have been shown to be highly effective in managing conflict. However, to keep pace with current market trends and to facilitate the development of effective conflict management strategies, future research is needed that involves participants from the corporate world as well as those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: CUES AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR MANAGERS FROM CONFLICT RESEARCH

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: CUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS FROM CONFLICT RESEARCH

Introduction

Conflict managed poorly in any organization has the potential to decrease individual and organizational effectiveness. It can lead to burnout, absenteeism, and significant employee turnover. Conflict managed well can increase individual and team productivity, and focus organizational resources on productive activities like providing service to the customer and fighting the competition instead of each other.

It has been estimated that in most organizations, managers, those who carry a primary responsibility for the performance of other employees, spend 20% to 50% of their time overseeing conflict. In terms of the bottom line, a conservative estimate of the conflict cost for a manager who earns $50,000 a year is $10,000 to $25,000. For a small company with five managers, this expenditure could equal or exceed the cost of having the services of an additional manager (Lippitt, 1982).

What then can companies do to assist their managers in dealing with conflict and improving their bottom line at the same time? First, they can train their managers to understand and own the conflict process. Understanding factors that influence conflict can assist managers in discovering opportunities for growth and avoiding the hazards often associated with conflict. To this end,

conflict research has produced many articles attesting to the commonness of conflict in relationships. In Berryman-Fink and Brunner's (1987) words,

> To fully understand the complex nature of interpersonal behavior, conflict researchers must systematically examine personality, relationships and contextual factors as they affect self-reported and behavioral indices of conflict management styles. Only after we understand what motivates individuals to select certain behaviors in conflicts can we deal with the effectiveness of strategies for managing interpersonal conflicts. (p. 45)

The object of this paper then will be to look at the development of conflict research with respect to managers and to examine individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors that affect the management of conflict. Since there is no standard definition of the term manager in the literature, for the purposes of this literature review manager is defined broadly as those who carry primary responsibility for the performance of other employees.

Empirical Literature Review

Conflict in this review is presented as a process in which one person perceives that personal interests are being opposed or affected negatively by another. The following will highlight some of the individual characteristics and organizational factors that have been shown to affect managers and their subordinates. Although there may well be more variables that affect conflict and how it is managed in the workplace, an exhaustive review of all factors is beyond the scope of this paper. The literature selected for this review was

limited to conflict research studies that employed managers in the sample rather than studies that have relied exclusively on university subjects; therefore, the variables discussed herein are also limited to the variables that have been examined in these particular studies. Although some support the use of students, Walters-York and Curatola (1998) suggest that placing students in the role of managers for research purposes is conditionally appropriate and may be limited by their lack of general world experience and practical problem-solving experience. By thus narrowing its focus, this paper reduces the possibility of these limitations and provides an assessment of conflict management situations as they are experienced and resolved by managers.

It seems apparent that managers will find conflict interesting given that they spend so much of their time dealing with it. What may not be clear is the specific nature of their interest and how this might differ between levels of management. In a study exploring managerial interests in conflict management, Thomas and Schmidt (1976) surveyed 253 managers at an American Management Association training event. The questionnaire was designed to determine the general importance of conflict management as perceived by managers and to identify special interests of different levels of managers.

Thomas and Schmidt (1976) used a questionnaire that was divided into two parts, using 7-point Likert scales. One part, in particular, focused on the importance of conflict in managers' organizations and the other on interest in specific conflict topics such as sources of conflict, understanding dynamics, learning tools, kinds of participants, and supervisory levels. The sample of managers who completed the pilot questionnaire was broken into three levels

of management: 116 chief executive officers, 76 vice presidents, and 66 middle managers.

The mean (on a scale of 1-7) for managers on items related to the changing importance of conflict over the past 10 years was 4.96, and on items related to the importance of conflict relative to other more traditional topics (e.g., planning and decision-making), it was 4.45. As expected, conflict management managers do perceive conflict as an important part of their organizational life. The importance managers place on conflict is not surprising since they reported spending on average of 20.95% of their time dealing with conflict (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976).

Interest in conflict management was broken down into kinds of participants, supervisory levels, time frame, whys and hows, and psychological sources of conflict such as personality clashes and authority issues. Differences among means of the three management levels revealed some general patterns of interest across levels of management. Unfortunately, Thomas and Schmidt (1976) only reported whether the differences were significant at $p < .01$ and did not report any corresponding F or t values. Nevertheless, chief executive officers appeared less concerned with "lack of cooperation" as a source of conflict and more interested in conflict between individuals than in interdepartmental or intergroup conflict. Unlike chief executive officers, vice presidents were more interested in cooperation and rated their interests in lack of cooperation significantly higher than did chief executive officers. This is probably because vice presidents spend more time managing multiple departments and overseeing daily conflicts than do chief executive officers.

Generally, middle managers had the greatest interest in conflict management and showed higher interests in 10 of the 11 psychological sources of conflict, which seems logical since they spend one-quarter of their time managing conflict on the frontline of most organizations (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976).

The importance of looking at what interested managers some 25 years ago is twofold. First, conflict management is not a new topic for managers. Second, managers at different levels of responsibility differ in what they find interesting about conflict. Overall it can be said that conflict management then, and more so now considering the increased use of teams at every level of an organization, is relevant to managers. Interest in the topic runs high, and research is needed to better understand the process before attempting to create more effective conflict management training programs.

In order to assist managers in understanding conflict, a number of factors regarding individuals and organizations have been identified. Differences in individual characteristics have been shown to impact the development of conflict and its potential resolution. Persons differ significantly in styles of conflict resolution (Blake & Mouton, 1964), most notable are those commonly referred to as Type-A managers (Lamude & Scudder, 1992). Furthermore, gender differences (Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981) and individual moral orientation (Collins, 1996) have been shown to contribute to how conflict is managed within the workplace.

In addition to individual factors, characteristics of the organization itself contribute to the presence of conflict and how it is handled, which is apparent in comparisons between different settings (i.e., work vs. home; Chusmir & Mills,

1989) as well as at different organizational levels (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). Subordinates, as part of the organization, contribute their responses, which also affect managers' ability to manage conflict (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996). Finally, organizations have particular communication styles (Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1987) and decision-making practices (Schwenk, 1990) that contribute to the management of conflict.

This review of conflict literature that explores these factors leads to suggestions for future research. Through a greater understanding of the various components that contribute to conflict and its management, it is hoped that managers will be empowered to deal with conflict using more informed methods for resolution. In short, knowing how and where something is broken is essential for its repair.

Individual Characteristics

People do not simply respond to the conflict, rather they bring unique qualities to conflict in the form of individual characteristics. These include interests, gender, moral orientation, and enduring personality characteristics that are often associated with managers (e.g., ability to exert an influence, increased competitiveness, sense of time urgency; Williams & Naeerdran, 1999). Several of these characteristics have been found to be related to conflict and are presented in the following section.

Early Theorization: The Dispositional Approach

In the 1960s Blake and Mouton (1964) proposed the Dual Concern Model which has since become a significant tool for describing and understanding conflict behavior. The model has long been the base from which many researchers have conceptualized conflict strategies used in conflicts. The Dual Concern Model used the categories assertiveness (concern for self) and cooperativeness (concern for others) to describe the behavioral dispositions of parties in conflict (Deutsch, 1994). The dual concerns are independent of each other, but combine to produce a composite of five separate conflict-resolution style preferences (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conflict-resolution style preferences.

Competition is a win-lose orientation that involves the pursuit of satisfying one's own concerns, standing up for one's rights, and defeating

others. Accommodation refers to an orientation where satisfying the other's concerns is equally or more important than satisfying one's own concerns, whereas avoiding is a no-win orientation in which little or no interest is shown toward either party's concerns in an attempt to avoid conflict. Compromise is a partial win-win or lose-lose orientation in which a middle ground is sought that will satisfy each party. Finally, collaboration is the opposite of avoidance and refers to a win-win orientation. It is the pursuit of a solution that attempts to fully satisfy the needs of both parties. These five conflict-resolution style preferences provide a useful description of conflict behavior.

Many of the articles reviewed in this paper utilized measures based on the Dual Concern Model including Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI–II; Rahim & Magner, 1994) and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). This model reflects the early theorization in conflict research of focusing on the disposition of disputants (e.g., concern for self or other) in order to understand and manage conflict behavior. The dispositional approach to understanding the conflict process is still useful, as can be seen in this review by highlighting of individual characteristics. However, the usefulness of this approach is limited, and conflict research has evolved to incorporate other relational and organizational factors such as those that are characteristic of Type-A mangers.

Type-A Managers

Most if not all managers experience moments of high levels of personal stress that stem from working in competitive industries and sometimes from their own desire for control. However, there are some who, as a function of

their personalities, are drawn to the demands and challenges encountered in managing. This can be particularly perilous for managers who are limited by characteristics typical of Type-A behavior such as keen sense of time, urgency, ambition, competitiveness, hostility, and anger (Lamude & Scudder, 1992).

Lamude and Scudder (1992) hypothesized that there would be a significant and positive relationship between managers' perceived use of aggression and avoidance as conflict strategies with their subordinates and their Type-A orientation. Accordingly, they also theorized that a negative relationship existed between managers' perceived use of accommodation, collaboration, and compromise strategies used in conflict with their subordinates and their Type-A orientation.

Limited to working with men, Lamude and Scudder (1992) administered a self-report measure to 110 middle managers from a number of public service organizations to assess perceptions of their personality Type-A orientation and strategies for managing conflict with their subordinates. They also used the Type-A behavior on the Bortner Type-A scale, one of the most commonly used self-report measures of Type-A behavior in work settings. Conflict management strategies were measured using the Conflict Tactic Statement Scale.

Lamude and Scudder (1992) performed Pearson product-moment correlations between scores on each of the five conflict strategies and scores on Bortner's Type-A scale. They found the aggressive conflict strategy was strongly correlated with Type-A scores ($r = .60$) as they hypothesized; however, avoidance conflict strategy did not correlate with Type-A scores. Also as

expected, they found accommodation (r = -.47), collaboration (r = -.44), and compromise strategies (r = -.36) were correlated negatively with Type-A behavior.

Considering the qualities of Type-A personalities, it comes as little surprise that a strong association existed between Type-A behavior and an aggressive conflict-resolution strategy. Taking into account that managers spend 20% or more of their time managing conflict, it might be that their way to resolve conflict is more a function of their personality. Although Lamude and Scudder's (1992) research demonstrates that personality configurations, such as Type-A, may contribute to a manager's preferred conflict management style, it does not necessarily indicate that the association is causal. Managers who possess this Type-A behavior pattern may be able to consider including less aggressive ways to resolve their organizational conflict such as using accommodation, collaboration, and compromise. Increasing their flexibility by using other tools than the hammer of aggressiveness may prevent them from treating every conflict and subordinate as a nail when these other tools are more appropriate to the situation.

In considering the development of future conflict management training programs, more research is needed on the effects of current training and whether such training affects the correlations Lamude and Scudder (1992) found between certain personality types and conflict-resolution style preference. Before the discussion of such research, however, the variables of gender and moral orientation will be presented.

Gender

Shockley-Zalabak (1981) identified gender as a personality factor that influences conflict-resolution management and investigated its effects on preferences for utilization of conflict styles in personal, interpersonal, and overall contexts. The Hall Conflict Management Survey was used to compare five conflict management preferences: (a) win-lose, maximizing personal goals to the exclusion of relationships; (b) yield-lose, sacrificing personal goals in favor of the relationship; (c) compromise, a manipulative style that makes trade-offs between personal and relationship goals; (d) lose-leave, a hopeless attitude characterized by leaving the conflict physically, psychologically, or both; and (e) synergistic, the attachment of major importance to both relationship and personal goals.

Assessing 31 male and 38 female managers from five different organizations, Shockley-Zalabak (1981) used the Friedman Two-Way Analysis of Variance Test that analyzed the rank order preferences of men and women in the different contextual situations. The researcher also used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two-Sample Test to examine the strength of preference for each conflict style in each contextual situation.

The Friedman Two-Way Analysis of Variance Test was significant ($2\underline{X}^2_{\underline{r}} \geq 9.49$), indicating a significant difference in order and preference of conflict styles in different contexts, indicating situational adjustment of conflict styles by managers. The findings of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two-Sample Test showed no statistically significant differences between male and female managers in strength of preference for conflict styles in any of the situational contexts

(Shockley-Zalabak, 1981).

The rank order for all managers in intrapersonal, small, and overall contexts in order of preference was synergistic, compromise, win-lose, yield-lose, and lose-leave. The rank order for the managers in interpersonal contexts in order of preference was synergistic, compromise, lose-leave, yield-lose, and win-lose. Finally, the rank order for the managers in intergroup contexts in order of preference was synergistic, compromise, win-lose, lose-leave, and yield-lose (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981).

Interestingly, gender differences were not found among the conflict style preferences. Shockley-Zalabak (1981) contended that the experience of being a manager mitigates any possible gender differences that might have existed between the male and female managers. It was also noted that the changing rank order of preferences for conflict styles in different contexts suggests that conflict style preference may be more of a state rather than a trait variable.

In another study that examined gender and conflict management, Korabik et al. (1993) examined the conflict management styles of MBA students. The researchers assigned 196 students to one of four 49-person groups. In each of the groups, one participant was asked to play the role of supervisor. This role was given to 43 participants (27 men, 16 women) who had actual managerial or supervisory experience and did not differ significantly in age ($\underline{M}$ = 29.7 years) or in amount of supervisory experience ($\underline{M}$ = 4.2 years).

Prior to the meeting of the four groups, each participant completed the ROCI–II–Form B (Rahim & Magner, 1994), an instrument patterned after the Dual Concern Model. Three weeks following the administration of the ROCI–II,

the examiners conducted a role-play session in groups of four, a supervisor and three subordinates working as a team. It is possible that in real conflict respondents would behave differently than they did in the role-plays. Nevertheless, in the role-play, the supervisor wished to introduce a new work method that appeared to allow for increased productivity. The new procedure would have the three workers stop rotating positions and stay in their one best position. The supervisor was asked to take up the issue with the team. Two of the team members felt the jobs were already monotonous and strongly opposed staying in fixed positions, which led to conflict. The whole group then resolved this conflict and reached a solution (Korabik et al., 1993).

After the role-play session, participants were asked to describe their supervisors' behavior during the meeting. Supervisors rated their own conflict management behavior on a subset of items from the ROCI–II inventory. Subordinates also rated their supervisors' behavior on the same subset of items (Korabik et al., 1993).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the behavior descriptions and the ROCI–II were computed and revealed no gender differences on any of the five conflict management styles among the managers ($p < .05$). Korabik et al. (1993) conducted a post hoc analysis to explore gender differences among those participants who had managerial experience and those who did not have such experience. Consistent with other conflict research (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981), there were no gender differences in preferred conflict management styles among participants who had management experience. However, gender differences were found among those who did not have

managerial experience. Women without supervisory experience perceived themselves to be more accommodating, collaborative, and compromising than men, t (130) = 2.14, t (131) = 2.2, and t (131) = 3.4, respectively. Korabik et al. proposed that female managers' nonconformity to traditional female stereotypes and socialization within the manager's role accounted for the differences between women with managerial experience and those without managerial experience.

In research that examined more closely the relationship between gender and conflict management, Monroe, Disalvo, Lewis, and Borzi (1990) examined the impact of gender on the conflict management of difficult subordinates. Gathering data from 381 supervisors, the researchers used the Flanagan's Critical Incident Technique to assess the conflict behaviors of difficult subordinates.

The Flanagan Critical Incident Technique is a process in which each supervisor is asked to think of one male and one female subordinate who fit a predetermined operational definition of a difficult personality. A difficult personality was defined as a subordinate whose communication behavior is a consistent source of problems for the supervisor and who fails to adapt to feedback designed to remedy those problems. Following this, each supervisor then briefly described a recent example of the behavior of the subordinate when confronted with negative feedback in a conflict situation. It is important to note that the data were the supervisors' perceptions of the conflict management behavior of difficult subordinates (Monroe et al., 1990).

The incidents were then rated independently by five raters utilizing Bulmer's analytic induction sorting methodology. The sorting process produced four categories: avoidance, apparent compliance, alibis (refusing to take responsibility for the consequences of one's behavior, attributing it instead to external circumstances or to others), and relational leverage (a reinterpretation of negative feedback from supervisor implicating the relationship more than the feedback). The process was also done in such a way as to distinguish between male and female supervisors and subordinates (Monroe et al., 1990).

The data from the responses of the 381 supervisors (207 men, 174 women) who participated in the study were analyzed using a logic form of hierarchical log linear modeling with supervisor and subordinate gender identified as independent variables and category of difficult subordinate behavior as the dependent variable. The analysis obtained from this procedure provided a non-parametric analogue to that derived from an ANOVA application of a general linear model to a two-by-two factorial design (Monroe et al., 1990).

The analysis of supervisors' perceptions of difficult subordinate behavior showed that the gender of the difficult subordinate significantly affected the proportions of one or more categories of their responses. The likelihood ratio chi square associated with gender of the difficult subordinate exercised the most powerful effect obtained in this study, according to the researchers, accounting for about half of the deviation from the assumptions reflected in the null model (L^2 [3, N = 612] = 61.73). They also found that the gender of the supervisors significantly affected the obtained distribution of one or more of the categories

of responses attributed to difficult subordinates by their supervisors. Supervisors' gender was found to be nearly as important as difficult subordinate gender, accounting for approximately 40% of the deviation from the null model (L^2 [3, N = 612] = 61.73; Monroe et al., 1990).

Finally, beyond the above mentioned findings, supervisors' descriptions suggest that the interaction of gender combinations in supervisor-subordinate dyads significantly affected the proportions obtained with respect to one or more of the response categories assigned to difficult subordinate behavior. The interaction accounted for 10% of the deviation from the null model (L^2 [3, N = 612] = 10.55; Monroe et al., 1990).

Because significant main effects and an interaction were found to affect one or more of the categories of difficult subordinate behavior, an additional analysis was conducted to determine which categories were influenced and in what ways they were affected. Lambdas were calculated to compare the size and direction of each effect and suggested that (a) difficult male subordinates were described as using relational leverage proportionately more frequently than female subordinates, irrespective of the gender of the supervisor; (b) difficult female subordinates were described as using avoidance proportionately more frequently than male subordinates, but essentially not at all when paired with female supervisors; (c) male supervisors reported more avoidance than female supervisors regardless of difficult subordinate gender; (d) female supervisors reported significantly more relational leverage from difficult subordinates, regardless of their gender; and (e) when gender was homogeneous, the differences associated with such main effects virtually

disappeared (i.e., the response profile supervisors ascribed to difficult women in relationship with female supervisors was almost identical with that attributed to their male counterparts when paired with a male supervisor; Monroe et al., 1990).

Unlike Shockley-Zalabak (1981) and Korabik et al. (1993) who suggested that gender differences in conflict management could be mitigated through management experience and organizational socialization, Monroe et al. (1990) proposed that person-related factors (e.g., the participation of a difficult subordinate) may accentuate them. Bringing this aspect of conflict management into focus further accentuates the need for understanding this multifaceted process in planning management training programs, and others have followed suit in exploring the perspective of the subordinate's impact on a manager's ability to handle conflict.

One such study was conducted by Jurma and Powell (1994) who examined conflict management from the perspective of subordinates and how they perceive their managers. They examined the conflict management styles of managers as perceived by their subordinates with the hypothesis that the perceived gender role of a manager and his/her management style might be related. They also presumed that task oriented behavior such as providing and organizing information might be associated more with a masculine style, and interpersonally oriented behavior such as showing concern and respect might be related more to a feminine style. Accordingly, they hypothesized that androgynous individuals have the ability to exhibit either style equally well.

Jurma and Powell (1994) assessed 230 subordinates working under 45 midlevel managers in architectural, engineering, medical, and university organizations. The subordinates rated their managers' gender-role type using the Person Attributes Questionnaire. The researchers analyzed responses to the questionnaire using a median-split procedure. Managers who received scores above the median of 24 on the masculine items, but below the median on the feminine items were classified as masculine (range = 25-35). Managers who received scores above the median of 18 on the feminine items but below the median on the masculine items were classified as feminine (range = 19-32). Finally, managers who received above the median on both masculine and feminine items were classified as androgynous. Jurma and Powell felt it was important to have a high agreement on ratings of the managers so a decision rule was applied that required at least 66% agreement of the participants in a work unit on their classification of their manager's gender-role type.

Following the evaluation, Jurma and Powell (1994) were left with 107 participants: 28 (13 men, 15 women) who classified their managers as masculine, 31 (15 men, 16 women) who rated their managers as feminine, and 48 (24 men, 24 women) who evaluated their managers as androgynous. Participants evaluated their managers' using 7-point Likert-type scales. Managers' communication content (20 items) and style (17 items) when handling conflict were assessed regarding participants' satisfaction with their leaders, with their tasks, and with their own intrinsic satisfaction.

One-way ANOVAs indicated significance for measures of communication content, F (2, 104) =18.94, $p < .001$, and communication style, F (2, 104) = 47.97, p

< .001. Scheffé testing showed that participants gave significantly higher communication style ratings to managers perceived to be androgynous than to those perceived to be masculine or feminine, and significantly higher communication style ratings to feminine than to masculine managers. In addition, one-way ANOVAs indicated significance for measures of satisfaction with leader satisfaction F (2, 104) = 19.75, p < .001, with task, F (2, 104) = 9.83, p < .001, and intrinsic satisfaction, F (2, 104) = 6.24, p < .001. Scheffé analysis indicated that when participants evaluated conflict management situations, they were more satisfied with managers they perceived to be androgynous than with gender-bound managers on all three indices of satisfaction (Jurma & Powell, 1994).

The influence of gender on nonmanagers' conflict management style reflects common stereotypes of women as avoiding competition and being more conciliatory or accommodating than men. This is not the case regarding conflict management of managers; in fact, gender differences have been found to be mediated through the socialization and experience of being a manager (Korabik et al., 1993; Shockley-Zalabak & Morley, 1984). However, Monroe et al. (1990) found that the interaction effects of gender on managers' conflict management of difficult subordinates to be more complex. When additional factors (e.g., a difficult subordinate) are added to the situation, things change. Just as management experience mediated the influence of gender, person-related factors such as the participation of a particular subordinate accentuate them.

Research on the effects of gender as an individual characteristic of managers displays some interesting findings: Management experience tends to reduce gender differences, and subordinate characteristics influence conflict management patterns. The effect of experience on gender differences in style provides optimism for conflict management training programs. If general experience with management has an effect on conflict behaviors, specific training is even more likely to have an effect.

The complexity introduced when research includes subordinates' characteristics reminds those invested in management that conflict is an inherently multidimensional situation. Exploration of other, more multifaceted aspects of the manager's individual characteristics (e.g., moral orientation) and context (business vs. home) will provide further insight into the intricacies of conflictual situations.

Moral Orientation

A study by the author examined the link between moral orientation and conflict management at work and at home. Collins (1996) assessed 30 women (15 with management experience and 15 without) and 20 men (14 with management experience and 6 without). Some participants were from undergraduate and graduate classes, and others were managers from a local healthcare organization. Each participant completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) and the World View Questionnaire (Stander & Jensen, 1993) two times, each from a different situational point of view (family conflicts and work conflicts). The World View Questionnaire measures care and justice and was designed specifically to

differentiate between these two orientations as inversely related points on a continuum.

A justice orientation is defined as a concern for individual rights, adherence to rules, and reasoning from set principles to ensure persons are treated fairly. A care orientation is defined as an emotional concern for others that emphasizes understanding and communication (i.e., listening and being heard) in an effort to build and maintain relationships.

Forward stepwise regressions were performed using moral orientation, management experience, and gender as predictors of each conflict-resolution style preference (see Table 1). Preference for competition in family and business conflicts was predicted by a justice orientation. Those with a justice orientation preferred competition for dealing with both family and business conflicts. Management experience and gender made no significant contributions in predicting preference for competition in family and business conflicts (Collins, 1996).

Preference for accommodation in family and business conflicts was predicted by care orientation. People with a care orientation were found to prefer accommodation as a means of dealing with family and business conflicts. Management experience and gender did not make significant contributions to the prediction of preference for accommodation in resolving family and business conflicts (Collins, 1996).

Table 1

Beta Weights and R^2 for Stepwise Regression Predicting Conflict-Resolution Style Preferences

Predictors	Competition Conflict Resolution Style		Accommodation Conflict Resolution Style		Compromise Conflict Resolution Style	
	Family Situation	Business Situation	Family Situation	Business Situation	Family Situation	Business Situation
Gender						.30
Management Experience						
Justice/Care Orientations	.62	.43	-.43	-.35	-.37	
Adjusted R2	.37*	.17*	.17*	.10*	.12*	.07*

*$p < .05$

Preference for compromise in family conflicts was also predicted by a care orientation. People with a care orientation were found to prefer compromise as a means of dealing with family conflicts. Care orientation did not contribute to the prediction of a compromise conflict-resolution style preference in business conflicts. Preference for compromise was not predicted by management experience but it was predicted by gender. Women preferred

compromise as a means of dealing with business conflicts more than men did. Finally, moral orientation, management experience, or gender were not found to be significant predictors of preference for collaboration and avoidance conflict-resolution styles in family and business conflicts (Collins, 1996).

A 2 X 5 repeated measures Analysis of Variance was also performed to test for conflict-resolution style by situation interactions. A significant style by situation interaction was found, $F(1, 4) = 10.49$. Specific effects were calculated for conflict-resolution styles between situations. Significant differences in preference between situations were found. Competition, $F(1, 49) = 10.6$, and collaboration, $F(1, 49) = 3.88$, were more preferred in business than family conflicts, while accommodation, $F(1, 49) = 32.6$, was more preferred in family than business conflicts (Collins, 1996). Conflict-resolution style preferences in family and business situations were compared, and specific effects tests were calculated (see Figure 2).

Significant differences were found in family situations: Accommodation was more preferred than collaboration, $F(1, 49) = 7.63$; accommodation was more preferred than competition, $F(1, 49) = 21.26$; compromise was more preferred than collaboration, $F(1, 49) = 4.93$; compromise was more preferred than competition, $F(1, 49) = 23.12$; avoidance was more preferred than competition, $F(1, 49) = 16.55$; and collaboration was more preferred than competition, $F(1, 49) = 9.46$. Significant differences were also found in business situations. Collaboration was more preferred than accommodation, $F(1, 49) = 16.49$; avoidance was more preferred than accommodation, $F(1, 49) = 13.42$; and compromise was more preferred than accommodation, $F(1, 49) = 13.63$ (Collins,

1996).

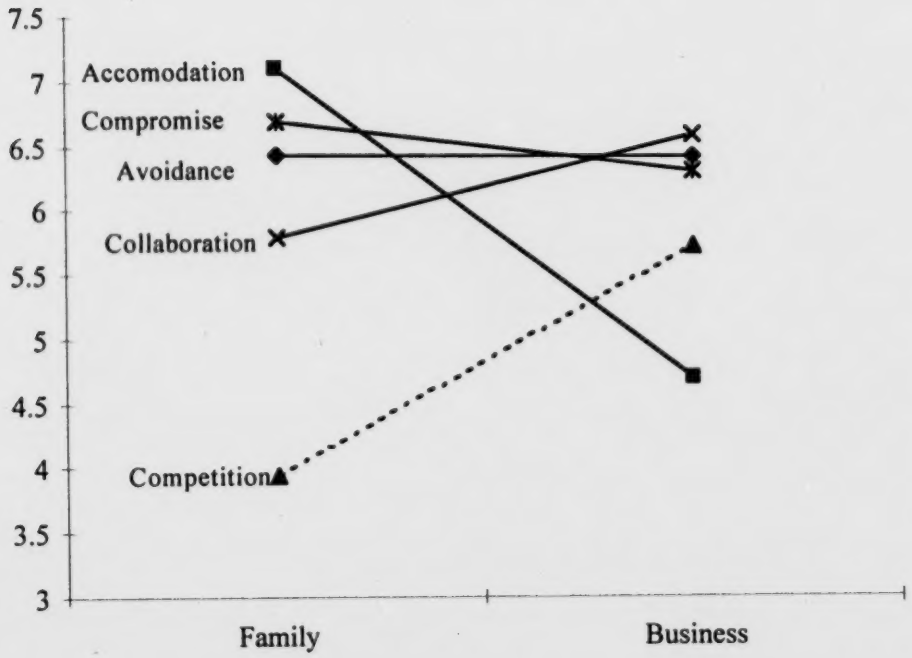

Figure 2. Conflict-resolution styles preferences in family and business situations.

Competition, accommodation, and collaboration were the only conflict-resolution style preferences that differed significantly between situations. Participants had a stronger preference for using competition and collaboration in business conflicts than in family conflicts. No differences were found between business and family conflicts for avoidance and compromise conflict-resolution style preferences (Collins, 1996).

In addition, in family conflicts, competition was the least preferred style among the five conflict-resolution styles. Also in family conflicts,

accommodation was found to be more preferred than collaboration or competition conflict-resolution styles but not more than compromise or avoidance conflict-resolution styles. Compromise was found to be more preferred than collaboration or competition conflict-resolution styles. Finally, avoidance and collaboration were more preferred than a competition conflict-resolution style (Collins, 1996).

In business conflicts, collaboration, avoidance, and compromise were more preferred than an accommodation conflict-resolution style. Preference for competition conflict-resolution style was not significantly different from any of the other four conflict-resolution styles (Collins, 1996).

Overall the findings supported the assumption that justice and care orientations act as a behavioral predisposition that influence conflict-resolution style preference. Based on the findings of this study, if conflict takes place at work, it is anticipated that a justice orientation is the predominant orientation used by co-workers. This, however, does not mean that competition is the most preferred conflict-resolution style. Rather, it is assumed that co-workers are more likely to collaborate, avoid, and compromise than to accommodate to resolve conflicts. However, if it is known that the co-workers possess a justice orientation (i.e., are not usually concerned about the needs and feelings of others) it should be expected that they would prefer competition to resolve conflicts. If it is known that they possess a care orientation (i.e., are concerned about the needs and feelings of their fellow co-workers), it should be expected that they prefer to accommodate and/or compromise to resolve conflicts. Furthermore, if the co-workers are women and possess a care orientation, they

may be more likely than male co-workers to use a compromise style to resolve conflicts (Collins, 1996).

If conflict takes place at home, it is assumed that care is the predominant orientation used by family members. This, however, does not mean that accommodation is the most preferred conflict-resolution style. It can be assumed that family members are more likely to accommodate, compromise, collaborate and avoid than to compete to resolve conflicts. However, if the family members possess a justice orientation it should be expected that they may compete to resolve conflicts. Finally, if family members possess a care orientation it is expected that they will accommodate and/or compromise to resolve conflicts (Collins, 1996).

As can be seen by the articles presented thus far, there is significant evidence that individual characteristics influence the conflict management process through their effect on managers and subordinates. Conflict research has evolved from a dispositional approach to one that incorporates multiple influences of individual characteristics such as Type-A personality, gender, and moral orientation provides a more accurate picture of the conflict management process. Individuals vary, and some situations evoke dispositions because they are appropriate for that situation. However, the management of conflict is more than complex than the simple sum of individual characteristics. In the following sections organizational factors will be examined in order to further elaborate on the evolution of conflict management research.

Organizational Factors

Various organizational factors have been identified as influences in conflict management. To consider only the influence of individual characteristics on conflict management would be to neglect the work context itself and the situational factors that are germane to managers and the way they manage conflict in the workplace. The following research provides an overview of an organization's impact on conflict management and offers additional information that informs the future development of conflict management training.

Work Versus Home

Situational influences should also be considered when examining individual characteristics and conflict management. Two common situations introduced in the last article were work and home. Chusmir and Mills (1989) compared the conflict styles of male and female managers in each of these situations and applied the role theory principle that the behavior of individuals in a particular role is a product of the interaction of their personality and the situation. They proposed that female and male managers, having the same roles and situational expectations at work, manage conflict the same. At home, however, the different roles and situational expectations of female and male managers should result in their managing conflict differently.

Two hundred one managers (99 men, 102 women) from low-level, middle-level, and top-level positions completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instruments under two sets of instructions. One set of instructions asked them to consider a situation at work in which their wishes differed from those of a co-worker. The other set asked them to consider a situation at home in

which their wishes differed from those of their spouse (if married) or a relevant other (if they were not married; Chusmir & Mills, 1989).

As noted earlier, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Inventory measures an individual's preference for competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating conflict styles. The measure consists of 30 forced-choice dichotomies. Each pair forces a comparison of a given conflict style to one of the other four conflict styles. Five ipsative scale measures are produced, one for each conflict-resolution preference style. A cross tabulation of the sample by sex and organizational level revealed a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 18.25$, $\underline{df} = 2$). Therefore analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to test for gender differences in conflict resolution styles while controlling for organizational level. The results of the ANCOVA indicated that managers, regardless of gender, were more competitive at work than at home and more accommodating at home than at work. The results of managers in a work situation showed that when levels of management experience is held constant, gender differences in conflict-resolution style preference are not found (Chusmir & Mills, 1989).

For the conflict situation at home, accommodation was often a preferred conflict-resolution style for both men and women. This is partially due to the nature of a personal relationship in which there is a higher concern for the other person than for oneself. It may also reflect the differences in roles and the nature of most work situations in which managers generally do not hold as high a concern for their subordinates as they do for their personal relationships at home, and therefore competition may be more appropriate and accepted

(Chusmir & Mills, 1989). This factor is also to be considered when training managers to handle conflict in the workplace. One's style of approach and ability to deal with conflict frequently varies from context to context and may also vary from organizational level to organizational level as explained in the next section.

Organizational Level

According to Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995), understanding styles of interpersonal conflict at various levels of an organization is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of organizational conflict management. These researchers performed two studies, the first of which assessed the relationships between conflict management style and levels of intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict experienced by managers for three organizational relationships: immediate managers, peers, and subordinates. Intrapersonal conflict occurs when one is required to perform tasks or roles that do not match his or her expertise, interests, goals, or values. Intragroup conflict occurs as a result of disagreements or inconsistencies among members or between subgroups of a group, whereas intergroup conflict refers to disagreements or inconsistencies between members, representatives, or leaders of two or more groups.

Participants were 125 full-time managers (59 women, 66 men) from state, regional, and local volunteer organizations throughout the United States. They were attending leadership institutes at three U.S. universities and completed various instruments as part of their course requirements. The first measure was one of three forms of the ROCI–II (Rahim & Magner, 1994), which assesses the

respondent's conflict management style using a 5-point Likert-type scale; a higher score indicates greater use of the conflict-resolution style. Thirty-four respondents completed Form A (boss), 42 completed Form B (subordinate), and the remaining 49 completed Form C (peer). These forms assessed the respondent's self-perceived conflict management style used with his or her immediate supervisor, subordinates, or work-group peers, respectively (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

All participants completed the ROCI-I (Rahim, 1983), which assessed the amount of intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict that the individual experienced at work. This measure consists of 5-point Likert-type scales; the higher the score, the greater the amount of conflict. Results revealed that integrating and compromising (r = .44) as well as avoiding and obliging (r = .42) were significantly correlated. Integrating was significantly and negatively correlated with all three levels of conflict, whereas avoiding was significantly and positively correlated with both intragroup and intergroup conflict. In other words, high integrating was associated with low conflict in intrapersonal, intergroup, and intragroup settings. Higher avoidance was associated with higher conflict in intergroup and intragroup settings (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

To further explore these relationships, Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) divided the respondents into high- and low-scoring groups, using median splits, for each of the five conflict management styles assessed by the ROCI–II. They used a series of t tests to assess the differences regarding intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict between the two groups, for each conflict

management style. In conflict with immediate supervisor, the only significant difference between high and low scorers on the five conflict management styles concerned obliging. High obligers reported significantly more intrapersonal conflict than low obligers did (M = 2.23 and 1.71, respectively; t [32] = 2.45, p < .05).

In conflict with subordinates, high integrators reported significantly more intrapersonal conflict than did low integrators, (M = 2.07 and 1.78, respectively), t (40) = 1.96. High integrators also reported significantly more intragroup conflict than did low integrators, (M = 2.47 and 2.09, respectively), t (40) = 1.99, which seems reasonable considering the effort often required to work out differences. Additionally, low dominators reported significantly more intragroup conflict than did high dominators, (M = 2.46 and 2.03, respectively), t (40) = -.217. There were no significant findings regarding conflict with peers in any of the analyses (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

The objective in Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield's (1995) first study was to determine whether there were any relationships between the styles of conflict management people reported using in three contexts (with supervisors, subordinates, and peers) and the levels of intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict they experienced.

These relationships were not valid in the context of subordinates, however. For this context, high integrators reported significantly more intrapersonal and intragroup conflict. Although the results for the other two contexts were not significant, it seems that managers' attempts to use integrative approaches to managing conflict with subordinates may involve

additional levels of conflict. However, based on the finding that high dominators reported significantly less intragroup conflict with subordinates than did low dominators, it is suggested that some managers may find that taking command in situations involving conflict is easier and creates less dissonance than collaborating with subordinates about possible solutions. Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) also found that attempts to avoid conflict by managers are not always successful.

Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) concluded that the results of Study 1 generally indicate that integrating is a viable approach for managing conflict, but that its use with subordinates tends to increase conflict that might be avoided by using more aggressive action. In their second study, they also examined how conflict management style and level of conflict were related to two general reactions to work (employee job satisfaction and perceptions of equity) and four types of individual outcomes experienced in an organizational context (system outcomes, job outcomes, performance outcomes, and relationship outcomes).

As in the first study, Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) assessed managers, but in this study only 100 male upper and mid-level managers, with an average age of 42 years, from a large, Midwestern chemical firm were studied. The respondents completed five instruments: (a) the ROCI-I, which assesses levels of intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict; (b) Form A of the ROCI–II, which assesses the five conflict management styles used with one's immediate supervisor; (c) a one-item, 6-point global measure of job satisfaction; (d) a one-item, 7-point global measure of perceptions of equity,

adapted from Hatfield, Utne, and Traupmann (1979); and (e) a 20-item questionnaire designed to assess the extent to which respondents experienced important outcomes on the job.

For each of 20 outcomes, the respondents indicated the extent to which they experienced that outcome at work, on a 5-point scale. The 20 outcomes were divided into four major groups: system outcomes (pay, fringe benefits, job security, and promotion and advancement); job outcomes (ability, utilization, problem solving, challenge, decision making, responsibility, and independence); performance outcomes (accomplishment, status, competence, achievement, personal worth, and confidence); and interpersonal outcomes (belonging, recognition, appreciation, and job friendships; Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

As in Study 1, Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) found a significant relationship between integrating and compromising and between obliging and avoiding. The correlations between integrating and the three types of conflict were also consistent with the findings of Study 1—the higher the integrating score, the less conflict the participants experienced.

Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) used median splits to divide the respondents into high and low groups, for each conflict management style to better understand this relationship. Tests between high and low groups yielded significant differences only for integrators and avoiders. High integrators reported significantly less conflict than low integrators did for intrapersonal conflict, t (98) = 2.32, intragroup conflict, t (98) = 3.00, and intergroup conflict, t (98) = 3.72. These findings are inconsistent with those of Study 1, which did not indicate any differences for high and low integrators regarding managing

supervisory conflict.

The researchers then used multiple regression analyses to explore the relationships between conflict style and level of conflict and the other six organizational variables (job satisfaction, global equity, system outcomes, job outcomes, performance outcomes, and interpersonal outcomes). Each of the latter organizational variables was first regressed on the five styles of conflict management and then regressed on the three levels of conflict. The results of these analyses indicated a strong relationship between integrating and all six of the other organizational variables. Moreover, a higher dominating score was associated with less satisfaction on the job and fewer relationship rewards. Finally, conflict management style seemed to predict interpersonal outcome (r^2 = .36); both integrating and compromising were positively related to interpersonal outcomes, and dominating and avoiding were negatively related to interpersonal outcomes. In terms of level of conflict, the more conflict a participant experienced on the job, the lower his job satisfaction and perception of outcomes. These relationships seemed to be only marginally influenced by intragroup conflict, but significantly influenced by intrapersonal and intergroup conflict (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

The importance of examining relationships between organizational conflict and other work-related reactions demonstrated that there are significant relationships between (a) styles of conflict and (b) levels of conflict and individual job satisfaction, even though neither conflict variable predicted global perceptions of equity. It is clear however, that (a) the more integrating and compromising the participants tended to be, the greater their perception of

interpersonal outcomes (e.g., belonging, appreciation for others) and (b) the more dominating and avoiding the participants were, the lower their perception of these outcomes. The results also indicate that the more conflict the participants experienced at work (especially intrapersonal conflict), the lower their perception of outcomes. Thus, although it seems reasonable to expect that the functional outcomes associated with conflict should enhance organizational effectiveness, these findings suggest that certain types of conflict may have a negative effect on employees' reactions to work and to their organizations (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

Subordinate Responses

In another study by Wielder-Hatfield and Hatfield (1996) in response to what they saw as the "heavy emphasis on the potential functionality for managers" in conflict research, they examined the effects of a manager's conflict style on subordinates. They investigated the relationship between managers' conflict management strategies, as perceived by subordinates and the outcomes these subordinates report experiencing on the job.

Wielder-Hatfield and Hatfield (1996) gathered data from 2,253 subordinates whose managers participated in an executive development program at three major U.S. universities. Before attending their assigned program, managers distributed questionnaires assessing the conflict management strategies and subordinate rewards to their subordinates. Managers were instructed to survey as many subordinates as possible, with a minimum of three as a target. Their subordinates then returned the questionnaires anonymously to either the researchers or the appropriate

program site.

The subordinates completed questionnaires assessing their managers' conflict management strategies and their rewards. The surveys required subordinates to assess their manager's approach to managing conflict via twelve 6-point Likert scale items. In addition, subordinates' reward levels were also assessed by having the subordinates indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they experienced system (pay, fringe benefits, promotions and advancements, job security, and general working conditions), job (having responsibility, making important decisions, making use of one's abilities, doing meaningful work, and doing challenging work), performance (perceptions of accomplishment, competence, achievement, confidence, and personal worth), and interpersonal (recognition for good work, job friendships, status, appreciation, and a feeling of belonging) rewards on the job (Wielder-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996).

Wielder-Hatfield and Hatfield (1996) focused on three strategies (collaboration, accommodation, and forcing) and their relation to the four types of subordinate rewards. They hypothesized that conflict management strategies would be significantly related to a linear composite of subordinate rewards. Specifically they expected that collaborative approaches, because they involve parties in joint efforts to resolve conflict, should offer responsibility, decision making, ability utilization, and the like. Moreover, because forcing implies that a resolution to the conflict is imposed on the subordinate, they proposed that such a strategy would actually reduce job rewards. Accommodating was expected to have no relationship to job rewards. Finally, they proposed that none of the

strategies would be related to system rewards because system rewards are thought to come from organizational membership as opposed to any specific aspect of the superior-subordinate relationship. Therefore, conflict management strategies should have little relationship to an employee's obtaining these rewards.

Analysis revealed a negative correlation (r = -.62) between collaborating and forcing. In terms of subordinate rewards, collaborating and forcing were related to performance rewards (.32 and -.25, respectively) and interpersonal rewards (.38 and -.29, respectively). No relationship was found between accommodating and interpersonal rewards or between system rewards and any of the conflict management strategies (Wielder-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996).

The use of collaborating strategies by managers was the stronger predictor of subordinates' rewards, illustrating the important role managers' conflict management strategies play within their organizations. The bottom line for managers is that collaborating strategies are not only important in fostering productive superior-subordinate relationships through interpersonal rewards, but such strategies are also likely to play an indirect role in assisting subordinates in realizing fulfillment in their work through performance rewards (Wielder-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996).

Understanding and using interpersonal rewards is an important component of conflict management that can enhance a manager's effectiveness at handling conflict and, as such, should be part of a comprehensive program for training managers to maximize their ability to handle conflict. In addition to understanding their subordinates' responses, however, managers need a clear

understanding of their organizations' communication style and decision-making processes. These topics are addressed in the next two sections of this paper.

Organizational Communication Style

In seeking to understand the complex relationship between organizational communication style and conflict resolution style, Morley and Shockley-Zalabak (1987) examined the relationship between these styles among managers and non-managers by surveying 118 members (25 managers, 49 professionals, and 44 support personnel) of a large Midwestern community. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Instrument was used to assess conflict resolution styles, and a self-report measure was used to assess the frequency of message sending within the organization via 12 questions structured into a 3-by-4 matrix (message direction by message function) to assess organizational communication style.

In completing the self-report measure, participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they sent each message type in each direction. The four message types were (a) regulative, messages dealing with rules and regulations; (b) informative, information concerning the job; (c) innovative, messages concerning new ways of doing things; and (d) integrative, messages dealing with relationships between individual and organizational goals. The three message directions were communications to one's superiors, peers, and subordinates (Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1987).

The primary analysis was a 5 X 4 X 3 ANOVA (conflict-style by message type by message direction). Individual classification (compromiser, avoider, competitor, collaborator, accommodator) was the between-subject factor. The

frequency of each message type (regulative, informative, innovative, integrative) and frequency of message recipient (subordinate, peer, superior) were the within-subject factors. Morley and Shockley-Zalabak (1987) also used Pearson correlations to determine the extent to which each conflict style predicted communication satisfaction, satisfaction with conflict outcomes, and amount of participation in conflict.

Results of the 5 X 4 X 3 ANOVA showed that conflict style preference was unrelated to the total volume of messages that were sent by individuals within the organization. However, in terms of message function, post hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) indicated that compromisers were significantly more likely to report sending informative messages ($\underline{M}$ = 3.11) than either regulative ($\underline{M}$ = 2.85) or integrative messages ($\underline{M}$ = 2.73). Compromisers were also more likely so send innovative ($\underline{M}$ = 3.00) than integrative messages. No other differences were found to be significant. In function by direction post hoc analysis, message sending to superiors was significant, indicating that avoiders reported a tendency to send more integrative and informative messages to their superiors than either regulative or innovative messages (Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1987).

Correlations between conflict preference and participation indicated that individuals who preferred competition were significantly more likely to report having conflict with their peers ($\underline{r}$ = .287), subordinates ($\underline{r}$ = .208), and superiors ($\underline{r}$ =.167). Individuals who preferred collaboration were also more likely to participate in conflict with their subordinates ($\underline{r}$ =. 214), but not with peers ($\underline{r}$ = .111) or superiors ($\underline{r}$ =. 156). As might be expected, individuals who preferred

accommodation or avoidance were significantly less likely to participate in conflict with peers (r = -.233 or -.291). Individuals who preferred avoidance were significantly less likely to participate in conflict with subordinates (r = -.347), and individuals who preferred accommodation were significantly less likely to participate in conflict with superiors (r = -.209). Finally, communication satisfaction was positively related to preference for compromising in conflicts (r = .179), whereas conflict avoidance was negatively related to both communication satisfaction (r = -.253) and satisfaction with conflict outcomes (r = -.197; Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1987).

Secondary analysis utilized 10 one-way between-subjects ANOVAs to determine if individuals with different expectations and organizational positions differed to the extent to which they preferred each of the five conflict styles. Preferences for the five conflict styles relevant to managers showed that preference for the competitive conflict style was significantly related to position within the organization. Post hoc analysis indicated that managers reported being significantly more competitive than either professional or support personnel, whereas scores for preference on the other four conflict styles were found to be unrelated to organizational level (Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1987).

Organizational Decision-Making

Early research (e.g., Thomas & Schmidt, 1976) has maintained that conflict can be very valuable to an organization. During the past 10 years, however, there have been divergent opinions over the value of conflict to an organization. Some believe that conflict might undermine the organization, and

others are wary of its absence because it may lead to groupthink.

Considering this dilemma over the utility of conflict in an organization, a study by Schwenk (1990) explored whether executives perceived conflict as an aversive aspect or as a positive aspect of an organization. The researcher asked 38 members of an executive MBA program (8 women, 30 men) to write descriptions of decisions in which they had recently been involved and to complete a questionnaire dealing with those decisions. The executives were also divided into for-profit (n = 25) and non-profit (n = 13) organizations.

The questionnaire consisted of 38 items regarding characteristics of the problem formulation/decision process. The first items dealt with the presence of conflict in the decision process and asked if executives agreed or disagreed that conflict between goals, people, and organizational structure described the problem. The latter items consisted of pairs of evaluative adjectives about the decision-making process and required that managers indicate their beliefs about the process by making a mark on a continuum between the adjectives. The executives' responses were factor analyzed using Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization, and three factors emerged: Overall Quality (as judged by the respondents), Clarity (the extent to which the decision process was understandable), and Aversiveness (the extent to which the process was unpleasant, emotional, and tense; Schwenk, 1990).

Factor scores were then correlated between each of the items dealing with conflict between goals, people, and organizational structure. The resulting figures indicated that managers in for-profit organizations perceived negative relationships between Overall Quality and conflict between goals (r = -.26),

people (r = -.30), and structure (r = -.30). There was also a positive relationship between Aversiveness and conflict between goals, (r = .32) and people (r = .28). A binomial test was performed on the signs of the correlations, and all were in the predicted directions: positive for Aversiveness and negative for Overall Quality. These results suggest that managers perceive conflict as unpleasant which may lower the quality of their decisions (Schwenk, 1990).

Attending either to individual characteristics or to organizational factors alone neglects the complexity of the conflict management process and can provide a truncated model for developing management training for dealing with conflict. The research reviewed thus far suggests that a number of interactions (e.g., managerial experience reduces gender differences) affect how managers deal with conflict. Recognizing the value of individual characteristics, organizational factors, and interaction effects not only provides a better approximation of reality in conflict management, it also leads to greater efficacy of interventions and, therefore, greater potential for training managers in how to deal with conflict.

The State of the Art

Conflict research continues to evolve from its roots in the Dual Concern Model of the 1960s, and its dispositional focus is becoming a more descriptive model. Such a model is based on various aspects of disputants' conflict-management behavior as observed in specific situations. However, as stated previously, conflict management is a complex matter. Fortunately, the current trend in conflict research reflects this awareness and continues to offer an ever-

growing body of research that informs the development of management training programs that can teach managers how to handle conflict in more effective ways. It is noteworthy that some interesting methods have been utilized that integrate conflict management training and research study.

Conglomeration of Conflict Behaviors

One such study was conducted in Europe by Van de Vliert, Husismans, and Euwema (1995), who proposed that effective conflict resolution is a function of conglomeration and not a single behavior or mode. Conglomeration is defined as an aggregation of various degrees of several modes of conflict handling. For example, Paternalism, the offer of security and well being in response to compliance, could be seen as a conglomeration of forcing and problem solving.

Specifically, Van de Vliert et al. (1995) expected forcing or competition to be negatively related to the effectiveness of conglomerated conflict behavior. In turn, they thought that problem solving or collaboration would be positively related to conglomerated conflict behavior and that it would also be more positively related to the effectiveness of conglomerated conflict behavior at moderate levels of forcing or competition than higher and lower levels of forcing or competition.

Using first-line supervisors in Dutch Police Organizations, 116 participants were chosen because they occupied a conflict-prone position in the organization and because the police force guarantees clear-cut hierarchical relationships between superiors and subordinates. The supervisors were all male, and their ages ranged from 28 to 51 years.

Following the selection of the supervisors, Van de Vliert et al. (1995) developed a clever method to test their predictions. They selected a conflict issue, defined three stages of escalating reactions to the conflict, and trained confederates to perform this sequence of behavior. They then had the supervisors videotaped during a transaction with a confederate. Finally, they had judges assess the components and the effectiveness of the conglomerated conflict behavior by scoring the tapes.

Each conflict transaction was rated three times by two women and two men who all were unaware of the goals of the study. They assessed the units of analysis, the components of conglomerated conflict behavior, and the effectiveness of the behavior. The three stages of escalation were trivialization, underlying policy, and personal attack. These were used as the units of analysis. Each judge assessed independently the confederate's shift from one level of escalation to another. In 90 % of the cases they agreed on the transitions, and reached a consensus on the remaining 10 % (Van de Vliert et al., 1995).

The judges were trained for 2 days through videotape fragments and 56 self-report items from the Conflict Mode Instrument and the ROCI–II. In addition to the 5 conflict styles associated with these two instruments, they added confronting (defined as demanding attentions to the conflict issue) and process controlling (defined as dominating the procedure to one's own advantage). The judges assessed the extent to which each supervisor's reactions were characterized by the seven components of conglomerated conflict behavior. This was done by having them complete a single 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) for each behavioral

component and for each of the three stages of escalation (Van de Vliert et al., 1995).

Following this, each supervisor's ratings were averaged for each behavioral component. The judges also rated the effectiveness of each videotaped conflict transaction on ten 5-point scales for substantive and relational outcomes. The substantive outcomes were related to the ultimate number and severity of conflict issues, proximity to a solution, the chances of recidivism, and the quality of concerted task performance. The relational outcomes concerned the attention given to areas of common ground, ultimate amount of mutual distrust, misunderstanding, atmosphere, and personal relationship (Van de Vliert et al., 1995).

Using multiple regression analysis to test their hypotheses, Van de Vliert et al. (1995) found that as superiors, supervisors treated their subordinates more effectively if they removed forcing (β = -.59) or added process controlling (β = .46) or accommodating (β = .21). The behavioral components accounted for 61% of the variance in effectiveness. They also found that as subordinates, supervisors responded to their superiors more effectively if they removed forcing (β = -. 50) or avoiding (β = - 34), or added process controlling (β = .33) or problem solving (β = .28). The behavioral components accounted for 57% of the variance in effectiveness.

These findings show that less forcing increased effectiveness of behavior for both superiors and subordinates, thereby confirming Van de Vliert et al.'s (1995) predictions that forcing or competition would be negatively related to the effectiveness of conglomerated conflict behavior. In addition, the fact that

problem solving increased their effectiveness also supported their proposition that problem solving or collaboration would be positively related to conglomerated conflict behavior, but only for subordinate's behavior. The regressions of effectiveness on problem solving at low, moderate, and high level of forcing were also examined and revealed no support that problem solving or collaboration were more positively related to the effectiveness of conglomerated conflict behavior at moderate levels of forcing or competition than higher and lower levels of forcing of competition.

With these findings, Van de Vliert et al. (1995) showed that an improvement in the efficacy of problem solving tended to enhance effectiveness and that effectiveness is a function of conglomerate conflict behavior rather than of one dominant, isolated mode of handling conflict. Finally, research such as this that looks at conflict in another culture may be helpful in understanding conflict management. As the workplace becomes more diversified and includes employees from different cultures that do not share basic philosophical assumptions, cultural differences may prove to be an important factor in conflict management within and between cultures. Generalization to other cultures (e.g., American) must be tentative; however, the pattern of results appears to be in line with the research presented thus far.

Patterns of Styles

Historically most studies have looked at managers' conflict management styles separately, perhaps assuming that managers restrict their conflict management to using one style when resolving conflict. Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro, and Euwema (1999) explored the specific combinations of conflict

handling styles that result in differentiated patterns within groups of managers. They also investigated the effectiveness of each of the resulting patterns in terms of their influence on the parties' joint substantive outcomes and their mutual relationships.

Presuming that managers usually adopt configurations of conflict management styles, Munduate et al. (1999) analyzed conflict management patterns of 258 managers (184 men, 74 women) from the Netherlands and Spain. Participants were asked to handle a conflict with a confederate by role playing a superior or a subordinate. The conflict simulations were taped and scored by trained coders. The coders used self-report items from the MODE and the ROCI–II and evaluated the frequency of use of the five-conflict management style through a 5-point scale. They also evaluated dyadic effectiveness by using ten 5-point scales for substantive and relational outcomes.

To ascertain patterns of conflict management styles, Munduate et al. (1999) utilized cluster analysis. Their analysis clustered individuals on the basis of pattern similarity for the five styles of conflict management. They then used both hierarchical and nonhierarchical techniques, which generate non-optimum clusters. Finally, they evaluated the effectiveness and patterns of conflict management through differential analyses between the patterns of conflict management according to the variable of gender and relative hierarchical status. They also used nonparametric tests to examine the differences existing between the various patterns with respect to effectiveness.

Through their analysis, Munduate et al. (1999) found several patterns that corresponded to their research hypotheses. In Pattern 1, 23% of the managers, who reported infrequently encountering conflict situations, demonstrated a pattern of fairly low use of any of the five styles, but did show a preference for a competitive or dominant style. In Pattern 2, 24% of the participants demonstrated a pattern of frequent and predominant use of a competitive or dominant style and showed little use of the other four styles. In Pattern 3, 9% of the managers preferred a high use of compromising, integration and dominating styles, showing less use of the obliging and avoiding styles. In Pattern 4, 36% of the managers demonstrated high uses of both dominating and integrating and low use of the other three styles. In Pattern 5, 8% of the managers preferred a high use of the integrating style together with a reduced use of the other four styles.

The Mann-Whitney test (a nonparametric) was needed because of the variance between the patterns in the samples. This test showed that in Pattern 3, the use of three different styles combined was the most effective (Munduate et al., 1999). This pattern was low in frequency of use, however, so these results need replication in order to place high confidence in the finding.

The finding of Munduate et al. (1999) suggests that looking for one best way may not be the best way to approach resolving a conflict. Preferably a pattern approach combined with a focus on conglomerate behavior might allow for the identification of different ways in which managers approach conflict situations from a "more all-embracing point of view than the simple perspective of style of conflict management" (p. 23). Therefore, more research is needed to

examine the various combinations of styles, as well as what combinations seem to be appropriate in which situations, so that such information can be included in conflict management training.

As can be seen by the diversity of factors that influence conflict management, it is not surprising that conflict research has shifted from understanding conflict management through two dimensions (Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970) that produce single modes to a conglomeration of behavioral components (Munduate et al., 1999; Van de Vliert et al., 1995). This continually expanding perspective in conflict research offers greater potential for conflict management training.

The dispositional approach that conflict research has relied upon in conceptualizing conflict has promoted a two-dimensional view that defines an effective resolution as a high payoff for each disputant. This concept has been illustrated in the classic "orange" metaphor in which two ladies, after arguing about the division of a single orange, each ask for a split that favors them. Following a brief discussion, they agree to split the orange down the middle. At first this seems to be a fair resolution. However, when the ladies realize that one wants the peel for marmalade and the other wants the pulp for juice, they change their approach to managing their conflict. Their solution changes drastically. The first lady receives the whole peel (rather than half of it), and the other receives all the juice. Both ladies are completely satisfied. They have arrived at a more equitable solution, but something has still been overlooked. As Wall and Callister (1995) have pointed out, the seeds have been ignored.

Managers who operate from a model that does not attend to individual characteristics and organizational factors, as well as interactive effects, may fail to discover that a peel versus juice arrangement is better than half the fruit. They will most certainly fail to include the usefulness of the seeds. Conflict management research has come a long way in developing models that are more complex and include communally influencing, interacting contribution of individual characteristics and organizational factors in an attempt to consider the whole orange—seeds and all. Such a comprehensive approach is essential in the development and assessment of conflict resolution training, and the implementation of these training programs can be used to further assess and define the variables of conflict and its management. However, the process is far from complete, and more research is needed.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although conflict research has been evolving and continues to do so, there are several readily apparent areas where more research is needed. For example, training such as that studied by Van de Vliert et al. (1995) wherein the training process itself was also studied, would provide more detailed information about the efficacy of various interventions and, therefore, potentially bring to light other variables that may not have been considered. Managers operate in a complex milieu, and the more closely that environment can be approximated, the more meaningful findings will be.

Another suggestion for future research is that more of it be conducted with actual corporate managers rather than with simulations of conflict

behaviors and situations performed by students. There certainly is no shortage of potential participants, and organizations may very well appreciate the information gleaned from such a research venture. In addition, moving beyond university studies to greater use of actual managers' and subordinates' experiences will maximize the generalizability of findings (Walters-York & Curatola, 1998) and make the development of more effective conflict management training programs a lucrative and readily applicable endeavor.

Since most conflict research has been conducted within Western populations, researchers may be neglecting non-Western viewpoints, which could well be a major liability. For example, in Middle Eastern cultures, individuals in conflict are more likely to protect their own territory rather than take a team approach as in Western cultures (Salem, 1993). Since the American workforce continues to diversify, it requires models that are sensitive to the modern workplace. Therefore, it seems imperative that conflict research, if conducted in a current corporate context, include more studies with a more diverse cultural milieu than have been to date. Although there may be universal factors in conflict and its management, research is needed that explores and elucidates cultural differences in how various peoples approach the issues. In the current workplace, a multicultural understanding has become essential in training managers to deal with conflict.

Summary

As the world becomes smaller through technology and the workforce diversifies (regarding ethnicity, goals, values, etc.), conflict and its management

will continue to be a part of organizational life for managers. Since conflict management will entail even greater skill and energy (Lippitt, 1982; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976), managers must be able to do more and do it more efficiently. To that end, research needs to continue to inform conflict management and the training of managers.

Based on this review of the literature, it is apparent that conflict researchers have been trying to assist managers since the 1960s. Unfortunately, given the nature of theory development, conflict research has necessarily simplified a complicated process in order to study it. Although limited in scope, the dispositional approach formed the foundation of conflict research, leading to the later identification of individual characteristics that affect conflict and its management. Other relational and organizational factors have become a focus of conflict research.

For example, Lamude and Scudder's (1992) study of the personality characteristics of Type-A managers revealed a positive correlation between this personality style and aggressive and avoidance conflict management styles. Accommodation, collaboration, and compromise strategies had a negative correlation with Type-A personalities. Although these findings were not surprising, they are not necessarily indicative of a causal relationship. Further research is needed to assess the potential effects of conflict management training on these correlations.

Gender variables and moral orientation have also offered insight into the processes of conflict management. Shockley-Zalabak (1981) found no gender differences among conflict style preferences. However, this researcher

contended that managerial experience mitigates these potential differences. Likewise, Korabik et al. (1993) found no gender differences in the conflict management styles of experienced managers, but found significant gender differences among those without managerial experience. Inexperienced female managers perceived themselves to be more accommodating, collaborative, and compromising that did the inexperienced male managers.

Gender has also demonstrated a significant role in the differences between subordinates' behavior in conflict. Monroe et al. (1990) found that the interaction of gender combinations in supervisor-subordinate dyads significantly affected subordinate behavior. Unlike others (Korabik et al., 1993; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981) who have suggested that managerial experience moderate gender differences, Monroe et al. posited that person-related factors may, in fact, accentuate gender differences.

Whereas gender differences in conflict can be affected by both experience and subordinate responses, moral orientation can be affected by context (e.g., work vs. home). Additionally, the factors associated with organizations themselves have demonstrated significant differences in how conflict is managed. Additionally, organizational level (intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup), organizational decision-making processes, and a conglomeration of conflict variables contribute to the way that conflict is experienced and managed in the workplace.

Therefore, the approach of conflict research is necessarily expanding to further the understanding in this highly complex field of study. This review has identified several factors that influence conflict management and has revealed

that interpersonal and situational flexibility seems to be highly effective in managing conflict. However, more research is needed to better understand the multidimensional character of conflict and to facilitate the development of more comprehensive recommendations for managers.

Conclusions and Practical Implications

Managers cannot expect their teams to feel empowered and confident without the opportunity to collaborate in resolving conflict. In fact, if subordinates do not have the opportunity to work integratively, they may feel disgruntled. Managers trained in the use of integrative approaches can help reduce intrapersonal and intragroup conflict and are open to valuable input form their subordinates that has the potential to prevent further conflict (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995).

Managers have a vested interest in learning more about the prevention and management of conflict and focus on some topics more than on others. Frequently, their focus varies according to their level of responsibility in the organization, which is important to know in developing management education programs that are relevant for those who will be trained by them (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976).

In addition to being relevant to participants' managerial level, training programs need to consider individual characteristics such as those of the Type-A personality. Efficacious training in conflict management will empower Type-A managers to minimize an aggressive strategy and open the opportunity to utilize other, perhaps more appropriate, strategies (Lamude & Scudder, 1992). In

fact, all managers need training in interpersonal behavior, as well as in effective task management (Jurma & Powell, 1994).

Training should also emphasize that female and male managers respond to conflict situations in similar ways, thereby dispelling possible cultural beliefs and stereotypes that run counter to research (Korabik et al., 1993; Shockley-Zalabak & Morley, 1984). Furthermore, managers need to know that contextual factors such as organizational socialization may negate the impact of gender differences upon conflict management choices (Shockley-Zalabak, 1981). However, managers should also be aware that person-related factors (e.g., difficult subordinates) may actually accentuate gender differences (Monroe et al., 1990).

Even so, managerial experience (social learning) appears to contribute more to conflict resolution than does gender. Both men and women who are experienced managers demonstrate equal ability to change their conflict resolution styles to fit the situation. Therefore, conflict management training that enhances experience may also serve to mitigate any potential differences between conflict management styles of male and female managers (Chusmir & Mills, 1989).

There are clear benefits in training managers to handle conflict effectively. As managers promote an integrative style, they (a) mitigate negative outcomes (low job satisfaction and perception of outcomes received) for subordinates, (b) reduce intrapersonal and intragroup conflict, and (c) increase the possibility of valuable input from subordinates that may avoid additional conflict (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1995). Managers should not only

examine what they want for themselves, but also reflect on the impact conflict management strategies have on their subordinates. (Weider-Hatfield & Hatfield, 1996).

The ability to manage conflict effectively could be analogous to the making of harmonious music. Just as the sound from an orchestra is more than the sum of each musician playing an instrument, effective conflict resolution is more than the sum of each separate behavior. The coordination of musicians with one another and with their conductor is the difference between making noise or making music. Likewise, being equipped with only a set of various behaviors is simply not good enough; managers also need to be trained in combining these behaviors to create a pattern of conflict management styles. Managers may have one favorite way of resolving conflict, but need an ordered hierarchy of conflict preferences that should include, as others have suggested, an integrative style. The pattern might include a combination of compromising, collaboration, and dominating styles (Munduate et al., 1999).

Knowledge of individual characteristics and organizational factors, as well as a conglomeration of behaviors, are all part of how conflict occurs and is escalated or resolved. Based on these essential elements, conflict management training can provide both men and women who are responsible for the performance of other employees with a wealth of options for dealing with difficult situations in the workplace.

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